

2017 STRONG MEN & WOMEN



IN VIRGINIA HISTORY

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People of African descent have been a part of Virginia’s—and America’s—story since European colonization of the North American continent began. Yet the contributions of African Americans often have been ignored, obscured, or underappreciated by those who recorded history. In observance of Black History Month, the Library of Virginia and Dominion honor seven distinguished Virginians, past and present, as ***Strong Men & Women in Virginia History*** for their important contributions to the state, the nation, or their professions.

These men and women offer powerful examples of individuals who refused to be defined by their circumstances. Their biographies are a testament to the determination and perseverance displayed by extraordinary people during challenging times. These individuals demonstrate how African Americans have actively campaigned through education and advocacy for better lives for themselves, their people, and all Americans. It is these many contributions that the ***Strong Men & Women in Virginia History*** program seeks to recognize and share.

To learn more about these remarkable men and women, all of whom have used their talents and creativity to push for equality and inclusion in American society, visit our website at: www.lva.virginia.gov/smw.

Charles Spurgeon Johnson

1893–1956 | Bristol

SOCIOLOGIST & COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Growing up in Bristol, Virginia, **Charles Spurgeon Johnson** (July 24, 1893–October 27, 1956) experienced racial discrimination that led to his lifelong fight for equal rights. His well-educated parents sent him to an academy in Richmond, and in 1916 he earned a bachelor of arts degree from Virginia Union University. His studies in sociology at the University of Chicago were interrupted by World War I, in which he served as a noncommissioned officer with the 803rd Pioneer Infantry in France. After returning to the United States, he was deeply affected by his experience in the 1919 Chicago race riots. Subsequently, he conducted most of the research on the riots for the Chicago Commission on Race Relations. As a result of his work, the National Urban League appointed Johnson director of its research department in 1921.

In 1928 he left New York for Nashville, Tennessee, to chair Fisk University’s social sciences department. Johnson saw racial segregation as a threat to American democracy and prosperity. He systematically documented the negative economic and social effects of segregation on African Americans and made Fisk a center for studies on race relations in the South. Elected president of Fisk in 1946, Johnson was the first African American to hold the post, and under his leadership the university flourished. Widely recognized for his expertise on race relations, Johnson served on regional, national, and international organizations and commissions, including government appointments in 1946 to an advisory committee on postwar educational reforms in Japan and as a U.S. delegate to UNESCO.

Leonard “Doc” Muse

1923– | Arlington County

PHARMACIST & COMMUNITY LEADER

Leonard “Doc” Muse grew up in Delray Beach, Florida, where he went to school and enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1943. A year later, he decided to study pharmacy at Howard University, where he received his degree in 1948, when only about 60 African Americans across the country graduated with pharmaceutical degrees. While working in Washington, D.C., he was surprised to learn about the poor treatment African-American patients often received at drugstores in nearby Arlington County, where they were allowed to use only the rear

entrance to pick up prescriptions. In order to provide high-quality service to an underserved population, Muse and a fellow Howard graduate opened Green Valley Pharmacy in September 1952.

Located in Nauck, a historically African-American community, Green Valley Pharmacy sold general merchandise and offered a lunch counter with a soda fountain. Muse became its sole owner in 1955, and the pharmacy served as a vital community gathering place during a time of racial segregation. After the pharmacy suffered several instances of vandalism, Muse became a mentor to neighborhood youths, hiring them as employees and helping them save money for college. “Doc Muse” is known for his medical advice and generosity, often allowing customers in financial straits to buy their prescriptions on store credit, and he has inspired multiple generations to follow his example and pursue medical careers.

Arlington County’s board of supervisors acknowledged the significance of Muse’s community leadership when it designated Green Valley Pharmacy an Arlington Historic District in 2013.

Benjamin Joseph Lambert III

1937–2014 | Richmond

OPTOMETRIST & LEGISLATOR

After graduating from a segregated high school, **Benjamin J. Lambert III** (January 29, 1937–March 2, 2014) earned degrees from Virginia Union University and the Massachusetts College of Optometry. In 1962 he established his optometry practice in Richmond’s Jackson Ward neighborhood, where he became involved in numerous community organizations and local politics. In 1977 he was elected as a Democrat to the Virginia House of Delegates. He served until 1985, when he won the election to fill a vacant seat in the Senate of Virginia. Representing the Ninth District, he sat on the powerful Finance Committee, as well as the committees on Education and Health, General Laws, and Privileges and Elections. During his 30 years in the assembly, Lambert gained a reputation as a dedicated legislator who built coalitions across party lines to serve his constituents and all Virginians. He cared deeply about providing educational opportunities for all, regardless of background. He chaired the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Awards Committee, which the assembly created to provide scholarships for Virginians who had been students in jurisdictions where public schools were closed between 1954 and 1964 to prevent desegregation.

As a community leader, Lambert served on multiple advisory boards, including those for Virginia Union University, Dominion Resources, Sallie Mae, and the Virginia Commonwealth University Health

Systems Authority. Throughout his life, he received many awards and honors, including the Richmond Jaycees’ Outstanding Young Man Award (1972), Virginia Optometrist of the Year (1980), and the National Conference of Christians and Jews’ Humanitarian Award (1993).

Nominated by Wanda N. Wallin, principal, on behalf of the eighth grade class (2015–2016) at All Saints Catholic School, Richmond.

William E. Bailey

1940– | Accomack County

AVIATION PIONEER & PHILANTHROPIST

William E. Bailey graduated from Accomack County’s segregated high school at the age of 15 and went on to study at Virginia State College (later Virginia State University). There he excelled in wrestling and in 2003 was named to the VSU Sports Hall of Fame. Before graduating in 1960, he entered the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps and in March 1962 he joined the army as a second lieutenant. At a time when few African Americans served as army aviators, Bailey was a combat pilot during the Vietnam War. He received many honors, including two Distinguished Flying Crosses, three Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts. Before retiring with the rank of colonel, he also served as a pilot assignment officer at the Pentagon and as the personal pilot for General William Westmoreland and Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey.

Following his retirement, Bailey became a commercial pilot for Continental Airlines. During his four decades in military and commercial aviation, he trained more than 1,000 students. A mentor to African-American students, he strives to increase diversity in the field of aviation and has assisted aspiring pilots through programs supported by the Organization of Black Airline Pilots. Bailey stresses the importance of pursuing higher education. As a member of the VSU Foundation’s board of trustees, he has worked tirelessly to cultivate endowments and scholarships and helped establish the Bailey Family Endowment, which has provided more than \$150,000 in financial aid to VSU students. In 2016 Bailey was inducted into the Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame.

Margaret Ellen Mayo Tolbert

1943– | Suffolk

SCIENTIST, EDUCATOR & AUTHOR

Margaret Ellen Mayo Tolbert lost both her parents while growing up, but with support from her grandmother and mentors she graduated as valedictorian from East Suffolk High School. One of the few women studying chemistry at Tuskegee Institute (later Tuskegee University), she earned a bachelor of science degree in 1967. She went on to receive a master of science degree in analytical chemistry from Wayne State University and a doctorate in biochemistry from Brown University.

In 1979 Tolbert became the first woman to direct Tuskegee’s Carver Research Foundation, a position that enabled her to travel to affiliated institutions in Africa. She later entered government service and in 1994 became director of the Division of Educational Programs at the U.S. Department of Energy’s Argonne National Laboratory. Two years later she became the first African American and first woman named director of a Department of Energy laboratory (New Brunswick Laboratory). Tolbert was a senior advisor at the National Science Foundation, where she managed science and technology centers at major universities, and also worked to increase diversity in science and technology from 2002 until her retirement in 2011.

Tolbert has received numerous honors, including Tuskegee’s George Washington Carver Distinguished Service Award in 2007. She was named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1988. The author of numerous scientific papers, she also published her memoir, *Resilience in the Face of Adversity: A Suffolkian’s Life Story* (2015), in which she affirms the human ability to survive the unexpected, rally against adversity, and charge ahead on a path to personal accomplishment.

Stephanie Therese Rochon-Moten

1965–2015 | Richmond

TELEVISION NEWS ANCHOR & CANCER TREATMENT ADVOCATE

Born in Tacoma, Washington, and a graduate of Louisiana State University, **Stephanie Rochon** (May 3, 1965–June 3, 2015) began her career in radio in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, before ultimately becoming a news anchor in Austin, Texas. In 1999 she relocated to Richmond to serve as an evening news co-anchor at WTVR Channel 6. Asked by her news director to produce monthly reports on breast cancer awareness, Rochon drew on her mother’s experience as a breast cancer survivor for her “Buddy Check 6” segments. She related stories of survivors and important health information and in particular encouraged women to do self-exams and have a buddy remind them to get yearly mammograms. She focused especially on reaching low-income women and African Americans, who are disproportionately affected by the disease. The American Cancer

Society honored her work with its Regional Media Award, and in 2015 Rochon was nominated for an Emmy Award for “Buddy Check 6.”

In addition to her work in the newsroom, Rochon served on the board of the Ellen Shaw de Paredes Breast Cancer Foundation, which helps provide access to mammograms for uninsured and underinsured women. Rochon also participated in the annual Gift of Life Block Walk, in which cancer survivors and volunteers visit underserved African-American communities to share information and raise awareness of breast health. After her death from bile duct cancer in 2015, the Virginia General Assembly recognized Rochon’s work on behalf of women’s health and the “Buddy Check 6” reports, which continue to air on Channel 6.

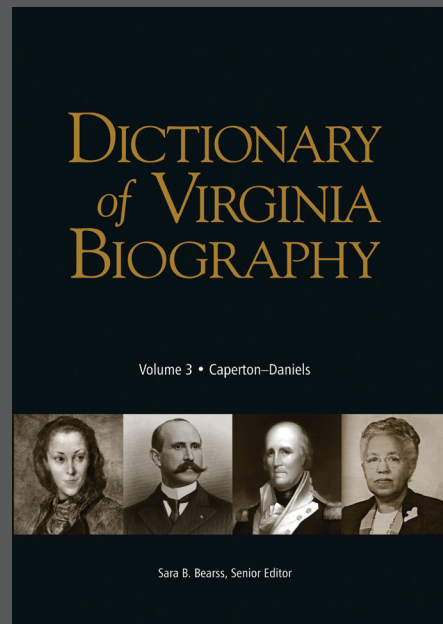
Mary Janipher Bennett Malveaux

1967– | Henrico County

JUDGE OF THE VIRGINIA COURT OF APPEALS

Growing up in Richmond, **Mary Janipher Bennett Malveaux** attended Collegiate School, where she nurtured a sense of service to her community. She attended the University of Virginia, graduating with a bachelor of arts degree in 1990. She earned a law degree at the University of Richmond’s T. C. Williams School of Law in 1993 and was admitted to the bar. The following year, Malveaux began working as an assistant commonwealth’s attorney for Henrico County and gained a reputation as a tough but fair prosecutor. She left in 1998 to join a private firm, where she practiced civil and criminal law. She also became involved with Voices for Virginia’s Children, a nonprofit organization that advocates public policies to improve the lives and well-being of children whose needs are often underserved, and was named to its board of directors in 2007.

In 2011 Malveaux became the first African-American woman to be appointed a full-time General District Court judge in Henrico County. Two years later the governor appointed her to the Criminal Justice Services Board, which serves as the policy board for the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. The General Assembly recognized her talent and dedication on March 11, 2016, when it unanimously elected Malveaux as a judge on Virginia’s Court of Appeals, making her the second African-American woman to sit on the state’s second highest court.



Learn more about distinguished African Americans from Virginia in the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography* (Richmond: Library of Virginia, 1998–2006) and on the Library of Virginia’s websites, www.lva.virginia.gov and www.virginiamemory.com. Instructional materials, classroom activities, and nomination forms for the 2018 project are available at www.lva.virginia.gov/smw.

A joint project of the Library of Virginia and Dominion.



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Charles Spurgeon Johnson

1893–1956
Bristol
SOCIOLOGIST
& COLLEGE
PRESIDENT

Charles Spurgeon Johnson battled racism early in the twentieth century as a preeminent sociologist, author, educator, and college president.

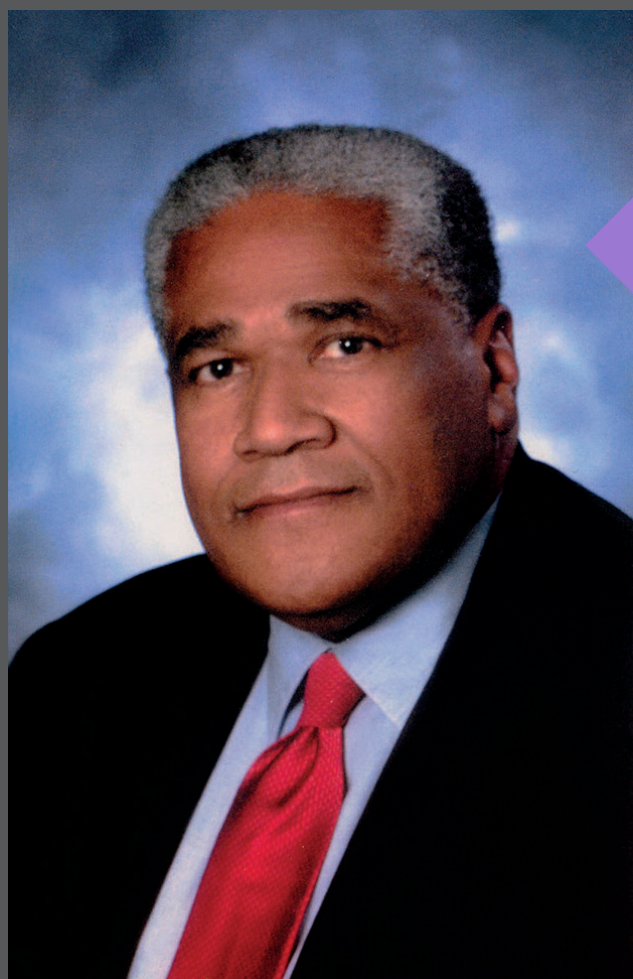
Leonard “Doc” Muse

1923–
Arlington County
PHARMACIST &
COMMUNITY
LEADER

For more than 60 years, pharmacist Leonard Muse has been a community leader in the historically African-American neighborhood of Nauck in Arlington County.



Green Valley Photo
Leonard Muse, Pharmacist



Benjamin Joseph Lambert III

1937–2014
Richmond
OPTOMETRIST
& LEGISLATOR

As a longtime community leader in Richmond, Benjamin Lambert practiced optometry in Jackson Ward and served in the Virginia General Assembly.

William E. Bailey

1940–
Accomack County
AVIATION
PIONEER &
PHILANTHROPIST

After a decorated career as a military and commercial pilot, William E. Bailey continues to work for increased diversity in the aviation profession and to expand educational opportunities for African Americans.



Margaret Ellen Mayo Tolbert

1943–
Suffolk
SCIENTIST,
EDUCATOR &
AUTHOR

Throughout her pioneering career in science, Margaret Tolbert has encouraged and inspired women and minorities to choose careers in math and science.

Stephanie Therese Rochon- Moten

1965–2015
Richmond
TELEVISION NEWS
ANCHOR &
CANCER TREATMENT
ADVOCATE

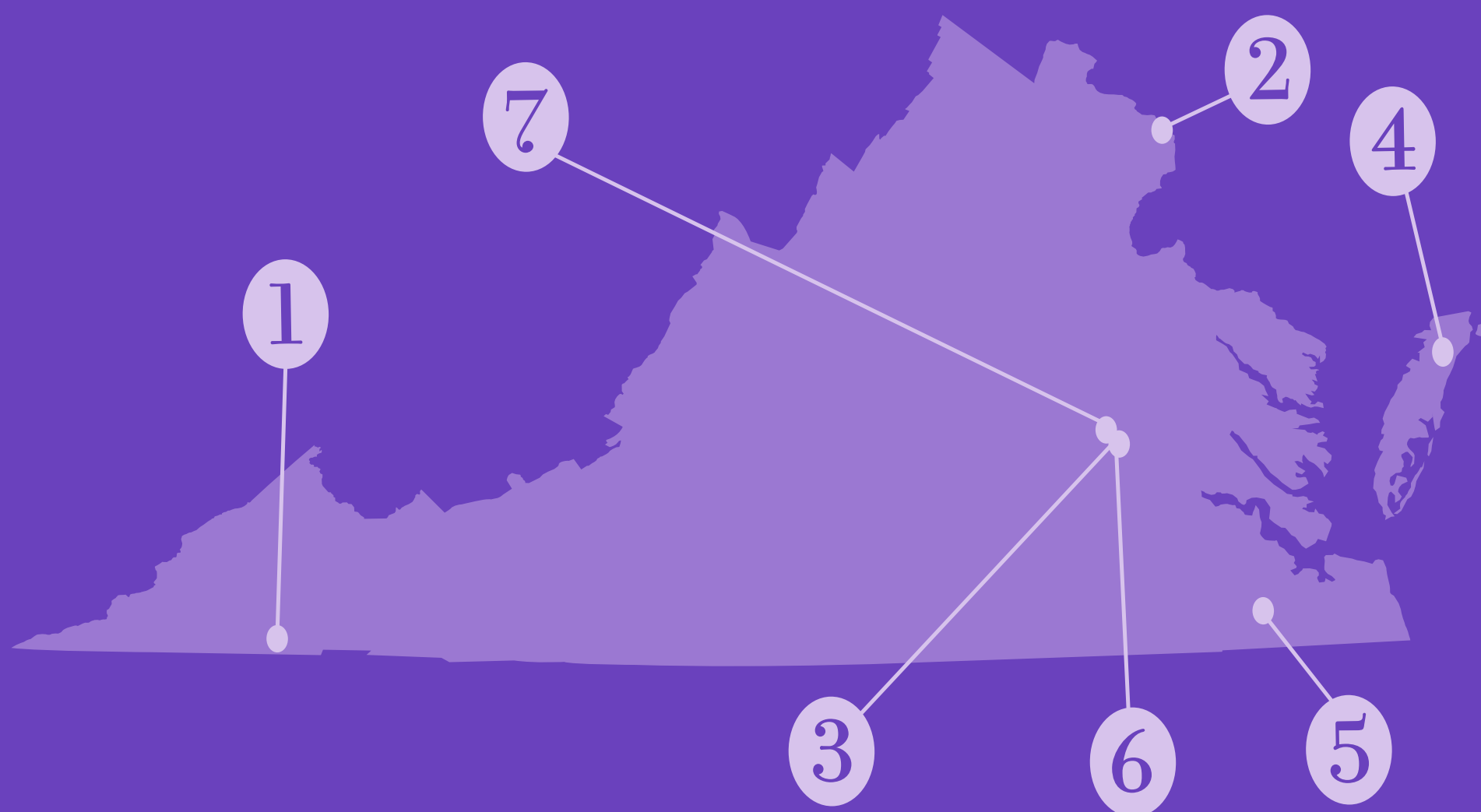
News anchor Stephanie Rochon raised breast cancer awareness through her award-winning “Buddy Check 6” news segments.



Mary Janipher Bennett Malveaux

1967–
Henrico County
JUDGE OF THE
VIRGINIA COURT
OF APPEALS

Mary Janipher Bennett Malveaux is the first African-American woman to serve as a judge of Henrico County’s General District Court and the second to sit on Virginia’s Court of Appeals.



1. Charles Spurgeon Johnson
2. Leonard Muse
3. Benjamin Joseph Lambert III
4. William E. Bailey

5. Margaret Ellen Mayo Tolbert
6. Stephanie Therese Rochon-Moten
7. Mary Janipher Bennett Malveaux

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